

4

Garibaldi and Italy

POINTS TO CONSIDER

This chapter focuses on the life and achievements of just one man, the controversial Giuseppe Garibaldi. The material is divided into the following sections:

- Garibaldi's early career 1807–49
- Garibaldi and 'The Thousand'
- Garibaldi and Rome
- Garibaldi: an assessment

Was Garibaldi a brave adventurer and a natural leader of men who led a remarkably colourful life, or was he more: the only true patriot of the *Risorgimento* who devoted his life to the cause of Italian nationhood? The balanced conclusion reached by most historians was that he was a mixture of both. Do you agree? Do not give undue attention to his eccentricities and fitful lifestyle; instead, concentrate on his successes and failures, and estimate his importance to the unification of Italy.

Key dates

1807	Garibaldi was born in Nice
1815	Nice became part of Piedmont
1831	Garibaldi met Mazzini and became a nationalist
1833	Garibaldi was sentenced to death for his part in an unsuccessful revolutionary plot in Piedmont
1848	Garibaldi returned to Italy from South America and became a royalist
1849 July 3	The Roman Republic fell
1859	Garibaldi returned to Piedmont and became a whole-hearted supporter of Victor Emmanuel II
1860 May 11	Garibaldi landed in Sicily
May	Garibaldi took control of Sicily
October 26	Garibaldi agreed that Victor Emmanuel should control Naples and Sicily
1862 August	Garibaldi was defeated at Aspromonte
1867 November 3	Garibaldi was defeated at Mentana
1882	Death of Garibaldi, aged 75

Key question
What sort of a man was Garibaldi?

1 | Garibaldi's Early Career 1807–49

Today, in Britain, the name Garibaldi is hardly remembered at all, except perhaps as the name of a currant biscuit; but in Victorian England it was a name to conjure with. He was the swashbuckling adventurer, the national patriot, the leader of men, who had struck a blow for the freedom in Italy.

On a state visit to Britain he was greeted with enormous enthusiasm by the largest crowds seen in London for many a long day, all of whom wanted to touch his hand as he rode in a state procession. During the drive he was greeted with a great deal more applause and excitement than Queen Victoria who accompanied him, very much to her annoyance. Soon afterwards his visit was cut short, almost certainly on royal orders.

Giuseppe Garibaldi's life by any standards was colourful and dramatic. He himself described it as having been tempestuous, made up of unusual amounts of good and evil.

Early life

Giuseppe Garibaldi was born a French citizen in Nice in 1807, but he was only eight years old when Nice became part of Piedmont after the Congress of Vienna in 1815. In any case, both his parents were Italian and he always thought of himself as Italian. His father was a sailor and despite his family's wishes that he should enter the Church, Garibaldi followed his father and at the age of 15 joined the **merchant navy**. It was as a result of this that a chance encounter in Marseilles in 1831 brought him into contact with Mazzini and altered his life for ever.

Disciple of Mazzini

Mazzini, the founder of 'Young Italy' (see page 28), believed that Italy should be free, independent and united, with the people having a say in government, and that a republic was more likely than a monarchy to bring this about. Mazzini's greatest gift was probably to inspire revolutionary leaders with nationalist fervour and patriotic enthusiasm, and the greatest of his disciples was Garibaldi.

Garibaldi was quickly converted to the dream of a united Italy, joined the 'Young Italy' movement, and in 1833 became involved in Mazzini's revolutionary plans in Piedmont. The plot, intended to start a mutiny in the army and navy, went wrong, and Garibaldi was among those sentenced to death for their part in it.

South American interlude

Fortunately for Garibaldi, he had already left the country before the trial began and so the sentence could not be carried out. Signing on as second mate, he sailed for South America, where he stayed for a dozen years, settling first in Rio de Janeiro. There he found that a branch of 'Young Italy' was already established. He joined and quickly became involved in revolutionary plans. Planning, though, was not enough for him. He wanted action and for a while he became a pirate preying on the shipping of the

Key dates

Garibaldi was born in Nice: 1807

Nice became part of Piedmont: 1815

Garibaldi met Mazzini and became a nationalist: 1831

Garibaldi sentenced to death for his part in an unsuccessful revolutionary plot in Piedmont: 1833

Key term

Merchant navy

A country's commercial shipping fleet.

New World, and then he joined a rebel army in Brazil. In between campaigns he found time to fall in love and run away with a fisherman's wife who became his devoted, insanely jealous companion for the next 10 years.

After six years of fighting, Garibaldi retired to Montevideo in Uruguay and the humdrum life of a commercial traveller selling spaghetti. He quickly became bored by this and joined the army defending Uruguay against an Argentinian take-over. He raised an Italian legion of **guerrilla fighters** which fought with much bravery if little skill, and was largely responsible for the final Uruguayan victory.

It was during this time that Garibaldi's **Legion** wore the famous red shirt for the first time. Originally modelled on the South American **poncho**, Garibaldi had seen it being worn by local slaughtermen. It was cheap and easy to make and being red in colour did not show the blood, of either cattle or men. Later, inspired by the uniform of the New York Fire Brigade, Garibaldi introduced sleeves, and then brass buttons, making the whole design much more like that of a shirt. After his return with his legionaries to Italy, the manufacture of these shirts was willingly undertaken by young seamstresses sympathetic to his cause (as shown in the painting below).

Guerrilla fighters

Small independent groups, using unorthodox tactics, fighting against regular troops.

Legion

The name taken by Garibaldi's irregular troops. Originally it was a division of 3000–6000 men in the army of Ancient Rome. Individual members were called legionaries.

Poncho

A circular cape-like garment with no sleeves or fastenings, and merely a hole for the head.

Key terms



'The Seamstresses of the Red Shirts' (1863) by Odoardo Borrani.

Instead of the red shirt, Garibaldi himself sometimes wore a white poncho, a relic of his South American days, and his portraits – including that by Saverio (see below) – show him with a circle-brimmed hat tipped over one eye. His shapeless trousers were homemade by himself, but as he never mastered buttonholes they had to be tied up with laces. He preferred a simple life and ate little. Rather rough in manner, he was generally good humoured, but could be ruthless and determined. His main interests were fighting and women. He 'collected' a large number of women over the years in addition to the three he married.

Scandal and gossip followed him, but could not hide his success as a leader of soldiers or his devotion to the cause of Italian unity.

On his return to Italy in 1848 he was to inspire great devotion from his men, and a near-religious adoration from ordinary people. Street songs, ballads and popular prints of the time show

A portrait of Garibaldi by Altamura Saverio.





A lithograph of Garibaldi from 1850 likening him to Christ.

him as semi-divine: in effect a local patron saint, his portrait was displayed in a place of honour next to that of the Madonna in Italian homes (see the illustration above). His charisma was overwhelming.

Garibaldi and the revolutions of 1848–9

In 1848, hearing rumours of a revolution in Italy, Garibaldi decided to return home, accompanied by 60 of his men and a number of out-of-date weapons. When he arrived in Nice, he immediately offered his military services to Charles Albert, King of Piedmont. This was a surprising thing for him, as a declared republican, to do. Charles Albert must have been surprised also.

Key question
Why did Garibaldi switch from being a republican to a royalist?

Key dates

Garibaldi returned to Italy from South America and became a royalist: 1848

The Roman Republic fell: 3 July 1849

Key term

Garibaldini

The soldiers of Garibaldi, also known as legionaries and Red Shirts.

Key question

Why did the Roman Republic last for such a short time?

The king mistrusted the offer and refused to see Garibaldi, sending him instead to the War Minister, who also refused the offer. Nobody, it seemed, trusted or wanted Garibaldi and his red-shirted devoted followers, the **Garibaldini**.

Garibaldi enlisted instead in the army of the revolutionary government of Milan in Lombardy, but before his men could see much action the news came that Charles Albert's Piedmontese army had been defeated at Custoza (see page 36). On hearing this, most of the legionaries deserted, and the few who remained with Garibaldi took action in only a few minor skirmishes. Later, an Austrian general remarked that the one man who could have helped Piedmont win the 1848 war was the one man they turned their backs on.

Why did Garibaldi offer his services to Charles Albert? He seems to have believed that only Charles Albert, as King of Piedmont, had the resources to defeat the Austrians and unite Italy. It was a decision that constituted a turning point in his life, as he abandoned the republican preference he had learnt from Mazzini. 'I was a republican', Garibaldi insisted, 'but when I discovered that Charles Albert had made himself champion of Italy I swore to obey him and faithfully to follow his banner.' Mazzini was hurt at what he saw as a betrayal, and Charles Albert failed at first to welcome his new follower; but Garibaldi, always single-minded in his devotion to the cause of Italian unity, could see no way of achieving it except by attaching himself to Charles Albert and afterwards to his successor.

The Roman Republic 1849

The Roman Republic was declared in February 1849, after the Pope had refused to make political changes to the government of Rome and was forced to escape from the city to safety in southern Italy (see page 37). The Republic was short lived, surviving for only four months. It was led by a triumvirate headed by Mazzini. Under his influence Rome had never been better governed.

Garibaldi and the legionaries arrived in Rome as the city prepared, in Mazzini's words, 'to resist, resist whatever the cost, in the name of independence, in the name of honour and the right of all states, great or small, weak or strong, to govern themselves'.

Garibaldi appeared a striking figure, patrolling the city defences. According to a Dutch artist who saw him in Rome in 1849:

Garibaldi entered through the gate. It was the first time I had seen the man whose name everyone in Rome knew and in whom many had placed their hopes. Of middle height, well built, broad shouldered, his square chest gives a sense of power – he stood there before us; his blue eyes verging on violet, surveyed in one glance the entire group. Those eyes had something remarkable ... they contrasted curiously with those dark sparkling eyes of his Italian soldiers, and his light chestnut brown hair, which fell loosely over his shoulders, contrasting with their shining black curls. His face was burnt red with the sun and his face covered with freckles

A heavy moustache and a light blonde beard ending in two points gave a military expression to his face. Most striking was his broad nose which has caused him to be given the name of Leone and indeed made one think of a lion; a resemblance which according to his soldiers was still more conspicuous in a fight when his eyes shot forth flames and his hair waved as a mane upon his head.

He was dressed in a red tunic and on his head was a little black felt, sugar loaf hat, with two black ostrich feathers. In his left hand he had a sabre and a cartridge bag hung from his left shoulder.

The Pope had appealed to Austria and Spain for help, but it was not from these Catholic monarchies – which might have been expected to come to the aid of the Pope – but from the president of another republic, Louis Napoleon of France, that help came. A French army arrived at the gates of Rome, but was driven back. Then, during a temporary truce, French reinforcements arrived. The end came quickly as the defenders, heavily outnumbered, fought bravely but in vain. At the beginning of July the Roman Republic fell to the soldiers of the French Republic.

The march to the coast

On the day before, Garibaldi had made a theatrical entry into Rome's Assembly with a sword so bent and battered from hand-to-hand fighting that it would no longer fit in its scabbard. He announced that further resistance was useless. The Assembly appointed him 'dictator' of Rome to make what arrangements he thought necessary. He outlined possible action to the Assembly:

- to surrender the city (impossible)
- to continue to fight inside the city (suicidal in view of the greatly reinforced French army now numbering 20,000 men, twice the size of the defending army)
- or to withdraw as many men as possible towards Venetia, where the Republic there was still holding out against a besieging Austrian army (the only acceptable option).

Garibaldi appealed to the crowd in the Piazza of St Peter:

Fortune who betrays us today will smile on us tomorrow. I am going out from Rome. Let those who wish to continue the war against the stranger, come with me. I offer neither pay, nor quarters, nor provisions; I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles and death. Let him who loves his country in his heart, and not with his lips only, follow me.

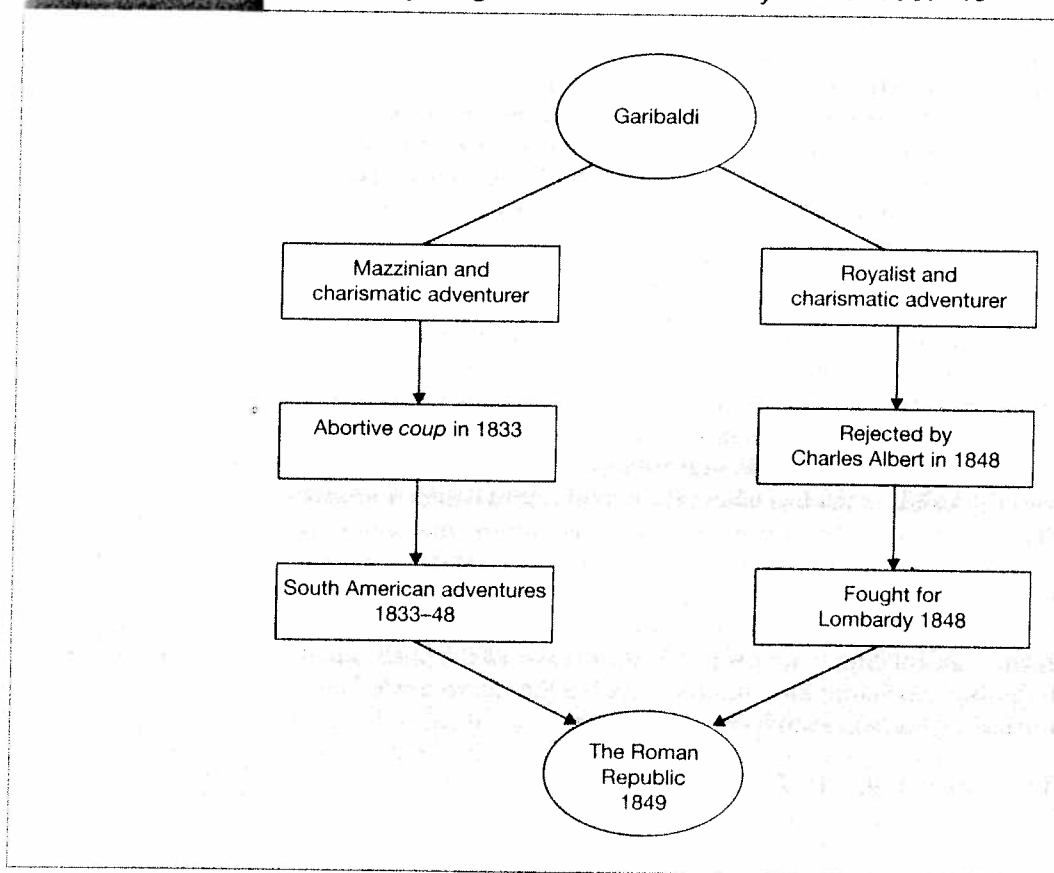
He collected nearly 5000 men, almost all the soldiers who had not been killed in the defence of Rome, and began a forced march towards the Adriatic coast.

This march became one of the epic tales of the *Risorgimento*. Over 800 kilometres of mountainous country, a shortage of food and water, and pursuit by enemy troops all took their toll. Only 1500 men reached the coast. Garibaldi's wife Anita, who had

accompanied him everywhere during the past 10 years and often fought alongside him, died on the way and he was unable to stop for long enough to bury her. Many of the *Garibaldini* were killed or captured or deserted to become bandits.

Garibaldi himself escaped to Genoa where he was arrested but later freed on condition that he left Italy at once. His career as a revolutionary soldier-hero seemed to be over; the drama played out, the legend finished as he once again set sail across the Atlantic, this time to North America.

Summary diagram: Garibaldi's early career 1807–49



Key question
What caused friction between Cavour and Garibaldi?

2 | Garibaldi and 'The Thousand'

Exile and royal service 1849–59

In the United States Garibaldi found what employment he could, eventually going back to sea as master of a ship travelling between the USA and China, until he inherited some money from his brother. He used this to buy half of the small island of Caprera off the coast of the island of Sardinia. There he took up farming but was able to keep in touch with events in Italy through

Key date
Garibaldi returned to Piedmont and became a whole-hearted supporter of Victor Emmanuel II: 1859

the **National Society**, which was working for the unification of Italy not as a republic but as a monarchy under the leadership of the King of Piedmont.

In the 10 years since Garibaldi had left Italy there had been many changes. The situation in Piedmont itself was greatly altered. Charles Albert had been succeeded by his son, Victor Emmanuel, who was pleasant, easy-going and rather lazy, and not unlike Garibaldi in his down-to-earth honest approach and somewhat uncultivated manners. He was, however, much more politically able than he appeared and managed somehow to keep on good terms with both Cavour and Garibaldi. He inspired great loyalty from the latter, though without returning it.

Cavour was by now chief minister, but his views on the need for Italian unity were still unclear.

After his meeting with Napoleon III at Plombières in July 1858 (see page 59), Cavour sent an invitation to Garibaldi through the National Society to visit Turin. There, at a meeting with Cavour and Victor Emmanuel, Garibaldi was given details of the plans for forcing war on Austria in 1859. He offered to recruit and train volunteers. Clearly, he had thrown in his lot with the Piedmontese king.

In the spring of 1859 the war against Austria began (see pages 62–3 for details of the war). The armies of Piedmont and France were badly organised, but the Austrians even more so, and French and Piedmontese troops were able to conquer Lombardy. Garibaldi's men played an important part in the fighting in northern Italy and Garibaldi was presented by Victor Emmanuel with the Gold Medal for valour, the highest military decoration in Piedmont.

Victor Emmanuel was now king of all northern Italy except for Venetia. But as part of the agreement with Napoleon for French support during the war, Nice and Savoy had to be ceded to France; and the handing over of Nice, the city of his birth, was a bitter blow to Garibaldi, who now decided that Cavour was 'a low intriguer'. A crisis point had been reached.

The expedition to Sicily

The preparations

In April 1860 a revolt started in Palermo in Sicily against the King of Naples. It was almost certainly organised by followers of Mazzini, who urged Garibaldi to take his men to the island, and it was supported by the National Society with its contacts throughout Italy. At the time Garibaldi was working on an armed expedition to recover Nice from France. This would include blowing up the ballot boxes to be used by those voting on whether Nice should remain Italian or again become French. He was, fortunately for the cause of Italian unity, diverted from this plan by news of the revolt in Sicily.

Garibaldi began to collect more volunteers and by early May 1860 had a force of about 1200, mostly very young men, who were known as 'The Thousand'. He also had with him his current mistress and a thousand rifles, but no ammunition, aboard two

National Society

A body set up in 1856 by moderate republicans, aiming to bridge the gap between Mazzini and Garibaldi. Led by the Venetian Daniele Manin, it began to look to the Piedmontese monarchy to spearhead unification.

Key term

Key question

Why did Cavour have doubts about this expedition?

Key date

old paddle steamers in the port of Genoa, ready to sail in the name of 'Italy and Victor Emmanuel'.

Cavour's attitude

Common sense suggested to the Piedmontese prime minister, Count Cavour, that the expedition was unlikely to succeed. It had been put together too quickly, the number of men was too small and their resources too poor, while it was known that the enemy forces were large. It was also known that previous expeditions of this kind had failed, including a much larger one in 1857. Garibaldi might be a brilliant leader of men but he had no understanding of military tactics. Cavour therefore was far from convinced that the expedition would succeed. Nor was he sure it was a good idea. In his opinion Sicily, like the rest of the south, was too poor and backward to be ready for a take-over by Piedmont. He therefore refused Garibaldi's request for arms and equipment for the expedition, and made it clear that it went without Piedmontese official support.

Some later reports suggested that Cavour tried to persuade Victor Emmanuel to arrest Garibaldi. But it was too late. The expedition had sailed on 5 May.

In a note to his confidential agent in Paris, Cavour made it clear that he had 'made every effort to persuade Garibaldi to drop his mad scheme', but could 'not stop him going, for force would have been necessary', which would have led to 'immense unpopularity had Garibaldi been prevented'. In the end he comforted himself with the idea that if the expedition failed he would be rid of Garibaldi, 'a troublesome fellow', and if it succeeded 'Italy would get some benefit from it'.

Key question

How was Garibaldi able to conquer Sicily?

Key date

Garibaldi landed in Sicily: 11 May 1860

Success in Sicily

Garibaldi reached Marsala in Sicily on 11 May. He was lucky to be allowed to land. His two steamers arrived alongside a detachment of Britain's navy, and the local commander – quite wrongly – thought Garibaldi was under British protection and so refrained from attacking, whereas in reality there was no connection at all. Garibaldi benefited from this happy accident. One of his men was wounded in the shoulder, and one dog in the leg. It was an auspicious start.

From Marsala, the Red Shirts advanced on Palermo, the island capital, gathering support on the way and defeating a Neapolitan army in hand-to-hand fighting. In pouring rain 'The Thousand' – now numbering nearer 3000 – reached Palermo at the end of May and found 20,000 enemy troops waiting for them. One of 'The Thousand' described the battle for Palermo:

There was no sign of any local uprising until quite late in the day. We were on our own, 800 of us at most, spread out over an area as large as Milan. It was impossible to expect any planning let alone any orders, but somehow we managed to take the city against 25,000 well-armed and well-mounted regular soldiers.

We were real ragamuffins ... we ran in ones and twos through alleys and squares chasing Neapolitans and trying to stir up the Palmeritans. The Neapolitans were too busy running away and the Palmeritans in taking refuge from the gunfire ... when Palermo finally fell it was all our doing, ours alone. Garibaldi showed the height of courage and we too were heroes just because we believed in what was impossible.

Garibaldi quickly took possession of Palermo, the garrison withdrew to Naples and the island of Sicily was his. His success outside Palermo was helped by the fact that an earlier revolt had left much of the island in a state of chaos, with bands of peasants roaming about looking for revenge against Neapolitan troops and oppressive landlords. Therefore, the speed of Garibaldi's success was partly due to his dashing and bold style of leadership and partly due to the caution of Neapolitan officers worried about possible ambushes of their men by Sicilian bandits and dispossessed peasants.

Garibaldi took control of Sicily: May 1860

Key date

Governing Sicily

Garibaldi appointed himself as 'dictator' of Sicily and at first was sympathetic to the aims of the peasant revolt. He abolished the tax collected on corn being milled into flour, which was a standing grievance of the peasants, and won their support by promising a redistribution of land. Soon, however, he changed sides and suppressed a number of new peasant revolts. Through this he lost the support of the peasants but won that of the landlords whose help he needed to restore law and order. He needed peace and stability in the island in order to be able to use Sicily as a jumping-off ground for an attack on the mainland of Italy and the next stage of unification. His obsession with a united Italy had led him to betray Mazzini's teaching about the importance of supporting the underprivileged.

Key question
Did Garibaldi govern Sicily effectively?

A report to Cavour on the situation in Sicily in June 1860 showed all was not well:

Garibaldi is greatly beloved. But no one believes him capable of running a government ... No one wishes to wound him, but all are determined not to tolerate a government which is no government ... He is troubled, irritated and weary beyond belief and his conversation clearly shows that the cares of government are crushing and overwhelming him.

As part of his law-and-order campaign Garibaldi introduced Piedmontese laws into Sicily as a preparation for annexation by Piedmont, but for the moment he refused to hand over Sicily to Victor Emmanuel. He was afraid that if he did so Cavour would stop him using Sicily as a base for the campaign against Naples. Cavour was undoubtedly surprised at Garibaldi's success in Sicily and probably displeased at the public acclaim. Garibaldi was too much in the limelight and likely to take too much of the credit for himself for uniting Italy if he was allowed to continue unchecked.

Cavour would have preferred things done more quietly, more constitutionally and with the credit going to Piedmont, Victor Emmanuel and himself.

Key question
Why did Garibaldi have such easy success in Naples?

Naples

Cavour was correct in his assumption that Garibaldi would next attempt to take Naples and then move northwards. But what could he do to prevent him? He tried to arrange a revolution in Naples in favour of Victor Emmanuel, but this failed. Then he gave orders to stop Garibaldi and his men from crossing the Straits of Messina to the mainland, but Garibaldi was too quick for him: dodging the ships sent to stop him he ferried his men across the Straits to Calabria on 22 August.

Then, although heavily outnumbered, Garibaldi fought his way north towards the city of Naples. When he heard that the King of Naples had left the city, he accepted its surrender, arriving there in advance of his troops, by train and almost alone in early September.

For the next two months Garibaldi ruled as 'dictator' over the Kingdom of Naples, unable to advance any further because the way was barred by a Neapolitan military stronghold in the north.

Nevertheless Garibaldi's plan was, as soon as possible, to move northwards, to the Papal States and then to Rome, and so complete the geographical unification of Italy. The fact that he was delayed in Naples gave Cavour time to act.

Key question
Why did Cavour feel that he had to check Garibaldi's progress?

Cavour forestalls Garibaldi

As we have seen (on pages 68–70), historians are uncertain about Cavour's precise motives at this stage. But he clearly did not much like what Garibaldi had been doing in Sicily and Naples and feared that an attack on Rome, such as Garibaldi intended, would lead to difficulties, especially with France. Napoleon III was already upset because, two months earlier on his way south, Garibaldi had landed a small force in the Papal States. That expedition fizzled out, but the warning of more to come was clear. The danger was that France and the rest of Catholic Europe would act if the Pope or the city of Rome were threatened.

Cavour was aware that many of the men who had joined Garibaldi (the *Garibaldini* now numbered about 60,000 men) were Mazzinians. This meant that they were opposed to the Church and its teachings and would be only too glad to join in an attack on Rome. They were also republicans and this posed another threat. If they won control, the whole nationalist leadership might slip away from Piedmont and Victor Emmanuel, and become again republican and revolutionary. Cavour and Victor Emmanuel must have had some doubt about whether even Garibaldi could maintain control over such a large army of irregular soldiers and enforce on them obedience to the cause he said he was supporting, that of 'Italy and Victor Emmanuel'. It was all becoming very difficult for Cavour.

Cavour's most pressing need was to stop Garibaldi from attacking Rome. The only way to do this was to send an army from Piedmont

through the Papal States to meet him before he could reach the city of Rome. The Pope had no wish to see either the *Garibaldini* or official Piedmontese troops in his territory, but Cavour acted anyway. Using the excuse that the Pope was unable to deal with a threatened revolt in his territory, the Piedmontese army with Victor Emmanuel at its head marched through the Papal States. They defeated a papal army on the way, and any civilians resisting the invasion were shot as traitors to the cause of a united Italy.

Unification almost complete

In October the Piedmontese army reached Neapolitan territory and Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel met on 26 October in what might have been a highly tense scene. But Garibaldi had no intention of doing other than prove himself a loyal subject. With a flourish of his broad-brimmed hat he saluted Victor Emmanuel as 'the first King of Italy' and agreed that the territory he had taken should be handed over to the king.

In the ballots that were soon held in Sicily, Naples, Umbria and the Papal Marches there was an overwhelming wish for annexation by Piedmont. Nationalist feelings were running high after all the drama of the summer, and there seemed no real alternative now that the previous rulers were no longer in place (see also page 71).

On 7 November Victor Emmanuel and Garibaldi rode together in a triumphal state entry into Naples. One of the staff from the French embassy in Piedmont wrote that

the immense popularity which Victor Emmanuel enjoys in the old provinces of Piedmont owes more to the royalist feelings of the people than to the personal qualities of the King. Events and above all the genius of his Prime Minister [Cavour] have raised him to the position he now occupies in Italy and in Europe. If ever his name becomes famous in history, his only glory will have been 'to have allowed Italy to create herself'. Like all mediocre men Victor Emmanuel is jealous and quick to take offence. He will find it difficult to forget the manner of his triumphal entry into Naples, when, seated in Garibaldi's carriage – Garibaldi in a red shirt – he was presented to his people by the most powerful of his subjects.

People are mistaken in crediting Victor Emmanuel with a liking for Garibaldi. As soldiers they probably have points of contact in their characters and tastes, which have allowed them to understand each other at times, but the hero's familiarity is very displeasing to the King. After all, what sovereign placed in the same situation would not resent the fabulous prestige of Garibaldi's name?

On the day after the state entry into Naples, Garibaldi officially handed over all his conquests to Victor Emmanuel, who in return offered him the rank of Major General, the title of Prince, a large pension and even a castle. Garibaldi refused them all because he felt that the king had behaved badly towards the Red Shirts. He had refused to inspect them and had not signed the proclamation of thanks sent to them. Soon afterwards the *Garibaldini* were disbanded, their services no longer required. As Garibaldi said,

Key question

Why did Cavour and Victor Emmanuel wish Garibaldi to play no further part in Italian affairs?

Garibaldi agreed that Victor Emmanuel should control Naples and Sicily: 26 October 1860

Key date

'They think men are like oranges; you squeeze out the last drop of juice and then you throw away the peel'.

Garibaldi retired to his island of Caprera with a year's supply of macaroni and very little else. Both Victor Emmanuel and Cavour were determined that Garibaldi should leave active political life. As far as they were concerned, his job was done. (As shown in the cartoon below, several key figures wished to snuff out even his reputation.) All Italy except for Rome and Venetia had been united under Victor Emmanuel and the constitution of Piedmont had been extended to the whole of the new Kingdom of Italy. If Garibaldi remained politically active, he was likely to cause trouble.

Garibaldi, however, did not agree that his work was finished. He had his eye fixed firmly on Rome as a future target.

'The Worship of Garibaldi'. In this cartoon of 1863, Napoleon III, Pope Pius IX and Prime Minister Ratazzi of Italy try to snuff out the candles that illumine 'Saint Giuseppe Garibaldi'.



Summary diagram: Garibaldi and 'The Thousand'

Was Garibaldi loyal to Victor Emmanuel II?

1859 – fought for Piedmont against Austria

Yes

March 1860 – Nice (his birthplace) ceded to France

Doubtful

May–July 1860 – took Sicily, which he refused to give to Piedmont

No

October 1860 – handed over Sicily and Naples to Victor Emmanuel

Yes

3 | Garibaldi and Rome

Rome was still occupied by French troops protecting the Pope, but there was continued pressure from Italian nationalists for it to be freed and included in the new Kingdom of Italy as the historical capital.

The first attempt

Garibaldi had always maintained that whenever the government found itself unable to act in the interests of national unity, it was the right of volunteers to take independent action. Thus, in 1862 he returned to Sicily from Caprera and collected together about 3000 volunteers for the conquest of Rome. Apparently with the approval of Victor Emmanuel but not of the Piedmontese government, Garibaldi set off on the march north. He did not know that Cavour's successor as prime minister, Urbano Rattazzi, had planned a similar *coup* to that of 1860. The plan was for an invasion of papal territory by a Piedmontese army which would reach the city of Rome before Garibaldi could. The plot failed because the French would not agree.

Garibaldi had already reached Palermo and been greeted with joyous shouts of 'Rome or Death'. Victor Emmanuel, sensing danger, immediately withdrew his support. No one tried to stop Garibaldi crossing the Straits, for the message sent to the naval commander at Messina was so vague that he ignored it and allowed Garibaldi and his men to cross to Calabria. There, in bad weather, they were shot at by local troops and forced to retreat into the mountains. All except 500 of the men deserted. Those who remained were defeated at Aspromonte in a short battle with government troops at the end of August. Garibaldi, much to his annoyance, was shot in the leg and captured (see the illustration on page 95). He was imprisoned for a time and then returned to Caprera.

Key question
Why did Garibaldi fail
to take Rome in
1862?

Garibaldi was
defeated at
Aspromonte: August
1862

Key date



'Garibaldi Wounded at Aspromonte'. In this painting an Italian general receives the surrender of the wounded Garibaldi. Such was his fame that the bandages around his calf were later venerated by some as sacred relics.

The whole adventure had turned into a disaster for Garibaldi personally and militarily. He was not used to being wounded or to being defeated. The government too was embarrassed that the old hero, one of those responsible for the unification of Italy, had been defeated and imprisoned by the government of the kingdom he had done so much to create.

Key question
Why did Garibaldi fail a second time?

The second attempt

All was not quite over for Garibaldi. In 1864 the Italian government agreed to protect Rome from attack and to remove the Italian capital from Turin in Piedmont to Florence in Tuscany, an indication that the ruling politicians no longer wanted Rome as the capital. In return the French agreed to withdraw their troops from Rome. This arrangement was not popular in Italy, however, as most Italians still wanted 'the Eternal City' as their capital. Riots in Turin left two dozen dead.

Nevertheless the deal was implemented. In April 1865 Florence was proclaimed capital of Italy, and in December 1866 the last French troops duly left Rome. Garibaldi now decided on action. He escaped from house arrest on Caprera and, disguised as a fisherman, sailed in a dinghy across to the mainland where he retook command of his men. Their aim was 'to capture Rome and abolish the Pope'. He hoped that local anti-papal uprisings would take place in Rome. These did not happen, but he and his men

marched towards Rome anyway. France sent an army equipped with the new, and very effective, **breech-loading rifles** back to Rome, and when Garibaldi attacked at Mentana on 3 November he was easily defeated. His second attempt to take Rome had ended in complete failure, and as a result the French were back in Rome. This marked the end of Garibaldi's part in Italian history, though not the end of his active life.

French service

In 1870, after the defeat of Napoleon III by the Prussian army and the end of the Second French Empire, Garibaldi offered his services to the new French Republic. The French government hesitated to accept. After all, Garibaldi was now 63 years old, crippled with arthritis and still troubled by the wound received at Aspromonte. He did not seem the ideal choice for a military leader on active service; but, under pressure from public opinion, the French government appointed him General of the Vosges army, a hotchpotch of sharpshooters and other irregular troops, who managed under Garibaldi's leadership to defeat the Prussians in three small battles.

Afterwards he was elected to the French National Assembly in recognition of his services, but finding his fellow members unfriendly towards him, he returned to his home on the island of Caprera where he remained until his death in 1882.

Meanwhile, French troops having been withdrawn to meet dangers from Prussia at home, Rome had been attacked and captured in 1870 by Italian troops. Garibaldi was distressed that the government should have taken what he thought was unfair advantage of Napoleon III's misfortunes. He felt it was wrong.

Garibaldi defeated at
Mentana: 3 November
1867

Key date

Key question
What motivated
Garibaldi to work for
France?

Death of Garibaldi
aged 75: 1882

Key date

Breech-loading rifles

Rifles whose bullets are loaded through the chamber (or breech) rather than through the barrel (or muzzle). They could be fired four or five times more quickly than muzzle-loaders, and soldiers could load them lying down.

Key term

Summary diagram: Garibaldi and Rome

1862	Garibaldi's first attempt – defeated by Piedmontese forces
1864	Agreement between France and Piedmont
1865	Florence became Italian capital
1866	French troops left Rome
1867	Garibaldi's second attempt – defeated by French forces

4 | Garibaldi: An Assessment

Garibaldi's contribution to the cause of Italian unity was considerable. His flamboyant personality, his striking appearance, his theatricality, his bravery, his legendary adventures both inside and outside Italy, his success with women – all these made him

always the centre of attention. He represented the non-intellectual active approach to Italian unity, a very different approach from that of Mazzini or Cavour.

Key question
What accounts for
Garibaldi's success
as a guerrilla leader?

As a soldier

Garibaldi was a good, sometimes brilliant, commander, excellent at sizing up the situation, decisive and determined. He and his men were best at hand-to-hand fighting, surprise night attacks and ambushes by day. He could appear authoritarian but relied more on his strong personality rather than strict discipline to keep control over his men. Regular Italian officers who visited his camp on the outskirts of Rome in 1849 were shocked by the informality. One of them wrote:

Garibaldi and his officers were dressed in scarlet blouses with hats of every possible kind, without distinguishing marks and without any military insignia. They rode on [South] American saddles, and seemed to pride themselves on contempt for all the usual military requirements ... they might be seen hurrying to and fro, now dispersing, then again collecting, active, rapid, untiring ... We were surprised to see officers including the General himself leap down from their horses and attend to the wants of their own steeds ... If they failed to obtain provisions from neighbouring villages, three or four colonels and majors threw themselves on the back of their horses and armed with long lassoes set off in search of sheep or oxen.

Garibaldi meanwhile ... would lie stretched out under his tent made from his unrolled saddle. If the enemy were at hand he remained constantly on horseback, giving orders and visiting outposts; often, disguised as a peasant, he risked his own safety in daring reconnaissances ... Garibaldi appeared more like the chief of a tribe of Indians than a General, but at the approach of danger, and in the heat of combat, his presence of mind and courage were admirable.

Garibaldi was what we would today call a guerrilla fighter, and as a leader of a guerrilla force he was unrivalled. He inspired great enthusiasm and devotion in his men, firing them with the same passionate belief in Italian unity that he had himself – at least when there was fighting to be done. During times of inaction, or if things became bad, they showed a regrettable tendency to desert. Garibaldi's relaxed style of leadership and the general lack of discipline probably made this inevitable.

It should be realised that an important factor in Garibaldi's military success was the incompetence and lack of enthusiasm shown by the enemy. In Naples in 1860 the king and his troops were so frightened by what Garibaldi had achieved in Sicily that they put up little resistance. In Sicily he had been helped by the general confusion on the island following the peasants' revolt and by local hatred of the remaining Neapolitan troops, who had an unenviable reputation for cruelty.

Nevertheless his conquest of the south was a remarkable achievement and a major element in the successful unification of Italy. He and his men accomplished it almost unaided in a very short time against all odds and expectations.

As a politician

Whether it was wise to unite north and south in this sudden and violent way is another matter. There was support in the south for an end to the rule by an oppressive and absolute monarch (the King of Naples), but this did not mean that there was a demand for union with Piedmont. Garibaldi and his men nearly all came from the north and had little understanding of the problems of the hot, dry south.

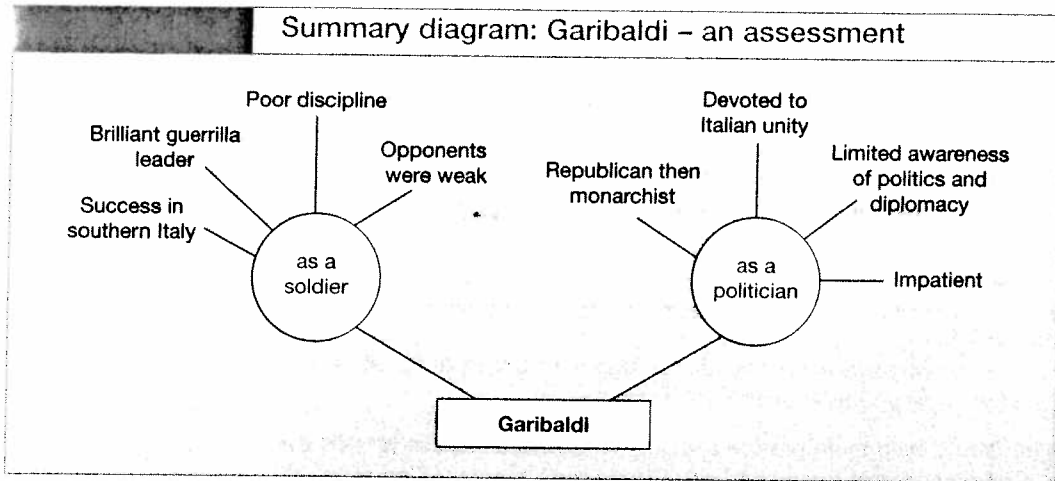
Much more could have been done for the peasants, particularly in Sicily. Opportunities to win popular support were missed everywhere. Perhaps if Garibaldi had not conquered southern Italy in his whirlwind campaign, the unsuitable Piedmontese legal and other systems would not have been introduced into southern Italy, certainly not so quickly.

Garibaldi was driven by his devotion to the idea of Italian unity. Everything he did was directed at achieving it. It became an obsession and as a result he could appear to lack principles. From being a republican he had suddenly become a royalist in the service first of Charles Albert and then of Victor Emmanuel; from a supporter of popular revolution he became a supporter of the establishment. In each case he was acting in what he considered to be the best interests of Italian unity. He could have ruled an independent southern Italy himself, but national unity was more important to him than personal power.

He did of course have his limitations. He was not very well educated and not much of a thinker. His greatest weakness was probably his impatience for immediate action. He acted first and thought afterwards, if at all, for his actions were dominated by his heart not his head. His understanding of politics was limited. He was not interested and was often unaware of the effect his actions might have on international relations, as in his plans to march on Rome in 1860, 1862 and 1867. Even if he had been aware of diplomatic repercussions, however, it is doubtful whether he would have been at all concerned.

That chance meeting with Mazzini in 1831 had given him his ideals and his purpose in life. Although he fell out with Mazzini, he never forgot 'Young Italy' or Mazzini's words: 'Without unity there is no true nation, without unity there is no real strength, and Italy, surrounded as she is by powerful, united and jealous nations, has need of strength above all things'. In Garibaldi she found much strength.

Key question
What were Garibaldi's weaknesses as a politician?



Study Guide: AS Questions

In the style of AQA

- (a) Explain why Garibaldi was forced into exile in 1849. (12 marks)
- (b) 'Garibaldi's actions were crucial to the success of Italian unification.' Explain why you agree or disagree with this view. (24 marks)

Exam tips

The cross-references are intended to take you straight to the material that will help you to answer the questions.

- (a) You should try to provide a variety of factors to explain why Garibaldi was forced into exile. There are a number of obvious reasons:

- because of the failure of the Roman Republic (pages 85–6)
- because Napoleon came to the rescue of the Pope
- because he was caught while trying to lead a march to the coast.

However, there are also more general factors that could be included:

- because Garibaldi was a freedom-fighter, a follower of Mazzini and a supporter of a free, independent and united Italy
- because of his personal charisma and the fear that he could stir up rebellion.

Try to show how these factors link together and to convey your personal judgement as to the extent of the threat Garibaldi posed in 1849 and to whom.

- (b) This question is asking you to evaluate Garibaldi's contribution to Italian unification. You should try to think of some details that would agree with the statement and some which would not. You will then need to balance these in your answer, but you should convey a judgement and show which side you find the more convincing. In agreement with the statement you might include:

- Without Garibaldi, unification would only have been in the north (you will need to refer to Cavour's attitude to explain this).
- Garibaldi was the man who was prepared to take a gamble – and he succeeded. He incorporated Sicily and Naples.
- Garibaldi was not afraid to march from the south towards the Papal States.
- He was a popular figure who won people over to the cause of unification.
- He was both a soldier and politician devoted to one cause.
- He was prepared to 'handover' the south and bring about the unification of October 1860 (page 92).

In disagreement with the statement you might include:

- Garibaldi never managed to incorporate Rome – and unification might have 'gone wrong' if he had.
- Venetia remained outside his unification.
- Garibaldi could never have succeeded without Cavour (the Kingdom of North Italy, March 1860).
- Garibaldi was merely a colourful figure – the real groundwork of unification was done by others.

In the style of Edexcel

How far do you agree that Napoleon III was primarily responsible for the success of Piedmontese efforts to drive Austrian influence from Italy in the years 1859–66? (30 marks)

Exam tips

The cross-references are intended to take you straight to the material that will help you to answer the question.

This question requires you to evaluate the significance of Napoleon III's decisions and actions – these could be what he decided not to do as well as what he did do. The question is not directed generally at why Italy was unified, but specifically at why the Austrians were driven out. The bullet points below give you a number of factors to consider. How will you organise them? Remember to devote about one-third of your answer to the part played by Napoleon III.

- Part of Piedmont's success in freeing Italy from Austrian influence was the war of 1859, in which Piedmont had French help to defeat Austria. This is an immensely important factor, as it was the lack of outside help that had led to Austrian victories over Piedmont in the past. Now, with victories in the field of battle, Austria accepted the expansion of Piedmont and was itself able only to hang on to Venetia in northern Italy. Be sure to concentrate on the essential points and avoid narrative; if you do not you are liable to get bogged down on this single, though vital, factor (see pages 62–3).
- The war of 1859 does not wholly explain Piedmont's success. For a fuller explanation we have to examine the growth of Piedmont, especially its new-found economic power and diplomatic status, after the 1848 revolutions. It became the foremost Italian state, and the most likely to bring about unification (see page 56). We must also be aware of the decline of Austrian power (see page 63).
- Furthermore, we have to examine how the truce of Villafranca, which Cavour so disliked, helped Piedmontese expansion (see page 63).
- Finally, we must look at the diplomatic events of 1866 to see how Venetia, the one and only Austrian stronghold in Italy, became part of the Kingdom of Italy (see pages 114 and 125).

Piedmont's success was clearly due to a combination of factors. Try drawing up a plan that allows you to draw arrows linking factors together and then emphasise their interaction in your answer. Ideally you should reach your conclusion before you begin to actually write your answer. That will give you a greater sense of purpose as you write and should help you to avoid narrative passages. So how significant was Napoleon III?

In the style of OCR

Study the four sources below on the impact of Garibaldi's expedition of 1860, and then answer **both** sub-questions. It is recommended that you spend two-thirds of your time in answering part (b).

(a) Study Sources A and B.

Compare these sources as evidence for the political situation after Garibaldi's conquest of Sicily. (30 marks)

(b) Study all the sources.

Use your own knowledge to assess how far the sources support the interpretation that Garibaldi's expedition revealed division rather than unity between Italians. (70 marks)

Source A

From: Cavour's letter to King Victor Emmanuel's Ambassador in Paris, 1 August 1860. Cavour considers what might happen now that Garibaldi has conquered Sicily in May 1860.

If Garibaldi captures Naples, just as he has taken Sicily, he will become master of the situation. King Victor Emmanuel would lose all his prestige in the eyes of Italians, who would see him as little more than the friend of Garibaldi. He would remain a dictator and refuse to join southern Italy to Piedmont. His prestige would then be irresistible. He would be stronger than we are. We would be forced to agree with his plans and help him fight Austria again. Therefore, the king must not receive the crown of Italy from Garibaldi's hands.

Source B

From: Count Trecchi, An Anthology of Letters, 5 August 1860. Victor Emmanuel sends a message to Garibaldi.

When Garibaldi reaches Naples, he must do whatever circumstances suggest: he could occupy the central Papal States. Once in Naples he should proclaim union with the rest of Italy, just as he has done in Sicily. He must prevent disorder, for that would harm our cause. He should keep the Bourbon army in being and ready, for Austria might declare war on us shortly. He should let the King of Naples escape; or, if the King should be captured by the people, Garibaldi should protect him and let him escape.

Source C

From: an account of the session of the Chamber of Deputies in the Parliament of Italy, 18 April 1861. Garibaldi clashes with Cavour in parliament.

Garibaldi: Italy is not divided, she is whole; I and my friends will always champion Italy's cause. (Cheers.) I must remind you of the glorious deeds of the Southern Army. My hopes for unity were ruined by the government when they sent forces against us. (*Protests from the Ministers' bench and violent exchanges within the Chamber.*)

Cavour: It is unpardonable to insult us in this way. Our intentions were always honourable. (*Applause from the Deputies' benches and the galleries.*) Mr Chairman! See to it that the government of the nation is respected! Call people to order! (*Interruptions.*)

Source D

From: A. Stiles, The Unification of Italy, published in 1986. A modern historian assesses the impact of Garibaldi's expedition.

There was support in the south for liberation from an oppressive monarchy but not necessarily a wish for unity with the north. Most of Garibaldi's men came from the north and had little sympathy for the impoverished and backward south. If Garibaldi had been less anxious to move north so quickly, more might have been done for the peasants instead of, as in Sicily, abandoning them to the landlords. An opportunity was missed to win popular support through agrarian reform. If the relationship between Garibaldi and Cavour had been different the outcome might have been better.

Exam tips

The cross-references are designed to take you straight to the material that will help you to answer the questions.

Read the 'General Introduction' section at the start of the study guide in Chapter 2, page 46.

- (a) As stated in the exam tips for Chapter 3, don't compare the sources one at a time, but compare them simultaneously, theme by theme or point by point as evidence for the political situation at that time, e.g. Source A regards Garibaldi as a potential threat to the position of Victor Emmanuel whereas in Source B the king is giving him instructions. Further, the king in Source B appears to be calm and confident about what will happen next whereas Cavour in Source A is very alarmed.

The sources show two very different ways in which Italy might be unified: Source B under Piedmontese leadership and direction, whereas Cavour in Source A is afraid that Garibaldi will overshadow Piedmont and will be able to direct the unification process himself. These two sources do not say what will happen – both refer to the future, although Victor Emmanuel is trying to make it happen by giving Garibaldi orders in Source B. In reality, was he afraid, just like Cavour in Source A? If so, was his message (Source B) an attempt to take command of the situation? Certainly Source A does not share the optimism of Source B about Garibaldi's political intentions. But might that reflect a difference more apparent than real? In a private letter, Cavour could express his thoughts clearly and fully whereas what the king said would become public, and be seen by or at least reported to Garibaldi himself. Victor Emmanuel had to be careful.

- (b) This question is the more important part. Hence you must read the other two extracts and gather from them the information that relates to the key issue: whether Garibaldi's expedition reveals unity or division among Italians. Source C obviously shows disagreement. Not only do Cavour and Garibaldi clash, but – as we can see from the reactions of the Deputies and the citizens in the galleries, with cheers from one side alternating with applause from the other – the wider political community does as well. Source D adds to the 'division' side. It points out key differences between north and south. Sicily and Naples did indeed declare for union, but their real aim had been to throw off oppressive Bourbon rule not to take part in '*Italia una*' (see pages 71 and 124).

You must bring in Sources C and D, but don't neglect A and B. Garibaldi's expedition certainly reveals the differences between the adventurer and the politician, and to some degree between the king and his prime minister (see pages 69 and 145).

Furthermore, you must use your own knowledge. Other points you must address include:

- The divisions not just between north and south but, within southern Italy, between the inhabitants of Sicily and Naples (see page 88).
- The fact that Garibaldi and his 'Thousand' were fighting other Italians (see page 89).
- The vexed issue of the Papal States and of Rome. Garibaldi undoubtedly wanted to press on northwards from Naples and to unite the whole of Italy. Cavour was determined to stop him (see pages 69–71); so was the Pope, who of course was also an Italian.

Make sure that, at the end of your answer, you come to some sort of conclusion. Clearly Garibaldi's expedition served the cause of Italian unification; of that there can be no doubt. But did it reveal division rather than unity? Most of us would answer yes and no; yes in some respects, no in others. (Remember that Garibaldi had his arguments with Cavour but that, even so, he thought of himself as a loyal Italian and he did hand over Sicily and Naples to Victor Emmanuel.) First you have to decide your view, and then you have to find a form of words that expresses your opinion as clearly as possible.